

large companies can provide, and they allow employees to choose coverage options that work best for them.

At the Education and the Workforce Committee, we have been proud to do our part to bring about this sustainable healthcare solution for millions of Americans. I welcome the news.

RECOGNIZING PREMATURITY AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, November is Prematurity Awareness Month, and as the number of preterm births continues to rise in the United States, it is important to acknowledge this serious issue.

In my own experience as an obstetrician having delivered over 5,000 babies, I have seen firsthand the seriousness of early birth. Premature birth is still the number one cause of infant mortality in the United States and around the world. Advancements in detection and care for infants born early have not made the same strides that other areas of the medical field have.

The premature birth rate in Kansas is right below the national average of 9.93, meaning that approximately 1 in every 10 babies is born premature. In the coming weeks, Congress has the opportunity to act and pass the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2018 and help those who cannot yet help themselves.

RECOGNIZING KANSAS GUARDSMEN OVERSEAS

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, this past holiday weekend, I had the pleasure, the opportunity, to travel to the Middle East and to the Horn of Africa. Specifically, I got to visit with some 700 Kansas National Guardsmen from the 2nd 137th Combined Arms Battalion and Battery C, 161st Field Artillery. These guardsmen have been deployed since April in support of Operation Enduring Freedom Spartan Shield.

I am often asked what was the purpose of my trip. Why do Congressmen do these trips?

First of all, I think it is important that, as a Congressman, I bring these troops a message of hope and thanks and let them know personally that we do care and are grateful for their service and the sacrifices they are making for this country.

Next, my goal was to check on the mental and physical well-being of our troops. Despite talking to hundreds of our soldiers, I cannot get one of them to register one complaint. Specifically, I thought their mental health was outstanding, that they were all in good spirits and, indeed, had great hope. Physically, their nutrition appeared to be well attended to. Their medical and dental needs were well attended to as well.

My one concern, perhaps, would be the housing. And though no soldier complained about housing, when you are there for a year at a time, I do

think we could supply our soldiers with better housing.

Today, we are reminded of the dangers of serving in our military as we lost three soldiers to a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. Certainly, my sympathy goes out to the families. I know the words that I can express will never be enough, but I would say this: Today we are also reminded once again that freedom is not free.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MAJOR BRENT RUSSELL TAYLOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, Major Brent Russell Taylor is one of six brothers to each wear the uniform of the United States Army.

While training Afghan security forces in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Major Taylor was killed by an apparent insider attack on November 3 in Kabul province while in the final months of his deployment. He is survived by his wife, Jennie, and seven children: Megan, Lincoln, Alex, Jacob, Ellie, Jonathan, and Caroline. In Utah, we mourn with the family of Major Taylor and grieve his loss and honor his sacrifice.

As Major Taylor and his brothers passed through Basic Combat Training, they learned the seven Army values in great detail. Those values are loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage, and Major Brent Taylor lived these values.

First, loyalty: Major Taylor swore to bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and support and defend our Nation's guiding documents against all enemies. He demonstrated his loyalty to this oath time and time again.

Duty: Major Taylor earned a Bronze Star for his outstanding dedication to duty during combat operations in Iraq. The Army says doing your duty means more than carrying out your assigned tasks. Major Taylor's military service record shows he employed this guidance to the fullest.

So, too, does his life outside the military, because Major Taylor was not only Major Taylor, he was also Mayor Taylor. His community and neighbors so entrusted him to lead and provide that they elected him the mayor of North Ogden City in Utah.

In that role, he did much more than carry out his assigned tasks. He worked to beautify and improve the city and to create a community that was welcoming to newcomers; and in the predawn morning of his last Christmas on Earth, Mayor Taylor ventured out into the cold to oversee the snowplows and salt trucks as they cleared the roads and made his city safe.

Respect: Major Taylor not only enjoyed the respect of his family, community, and fellow servicemembers, but his praises came from across the globe. In a letter from Afghanistan to

Mrs. Taylor following her husband's death, an Afghan aviator said: "Your husband taught me to . . . treat my children as treasured gifts, to be a better father, to be a better husband, and to be a better man."

A man does not receive that level of praise without first showing his own grand measure of respect.

Selfless service: As a high school senior in Chandler, Arizona, Brent delivered the honor speech at graduation, and his instruction to the audience was: "Go out. Be happy. Find peace and make a positive difference in the world."

Major Taylor left his family and American soil on four deployments to serve and "make a positive difference in the world." In that same honor speech, he gave the order to "stick with it to the end." He, himself, did just that.

Honor: Major Taylor honored his faith, his family, his community, and his country throughout his short life. Brent's social media postings are replete with photos of his children and family. They show images of love and service and patriotism, qualities of a man, a husband, and a father who honors his family and country.

In his last Facebook post, Brent implored that we all remember: "We have far more as Americans that unites us than divides us." And he ended the post with the words, "God Bless America."

Integrity: The Army says that integrity is a quality you develop by adhering to moral principles, and the more choices you make based on integrity, the more this highly prized value will affect your relationships with family and friends.

The days since the sad passing of Major Taylor have been filled with an outpouring of love and grief expressed by those who knew Brent. His integrity left an impression, and his integrity affected his relationships.

Finally, personal courage: In September of 2007, Major Taylor was commanding a convoy in Iraq when he was hit by an insurgent IED. His vehicle was struck by shrapnel, asphalt, and concrete debris. For the wounds received in action, Major Taylor was awarded the Purple Heart, and he would go on to deploy twice more.

Brent Taylor stood as an example of personal courage. He lived the Army Values.

In April of this year, the Department of Veterans Affairs opened a facility in North Ogden City. It is a place where veterans and their families can go to receive counseling and support. It is a place located in the heart of Brent Taylor's hometown.

As a small gesture to his service and his sacrifice, I have introduced a bill to name that VA facility the "Major Brent Taylor Vet Center Outstation."

The naming of a building will never repay the debt our Nation owes Major Taylor or his family, but it can stand as a humble reminder of the citizen soldier who lost his life in the service of others.

□ 1215

BORDER SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, in the coming days, this House will debate the importance of securing our border with Mexico. This should not be a controversial debate. Every nation has the right to secure its borders. There are, indeed, differences among nations from the type of government to the freedoms and liberties a country's people enjoy, and borders define where these begin and end.

Borders also allow countries to determine who and, as important, what is allowed to enter into respective nations. It is this latter point, Mr. Speaker, given the historical context in which the United States and Mexico find themselves, that impels not only the United States but also Mexico to ensure that we have a secure border. There are certain products, namely dangerous narcotics, being made in and shipped through Mexico that we do not want in the United States, and there are items such as illicit cash from drug sales that Mexico does not want imported from the United States.

Yes, we are concerned about knowing the identity of individuals coming into our country, and we need to be vetting each individual seeking admission to the United States. But it is the illicit drug trade, which is responsible for taking tens of thousands of lives on both sides of the border, that makes beyond urgent the securing of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Ninety percent of the heroin used in our country comes from Mexico. Fentanyl, methamphetamines, cocaine, and marijuana also flow across the border in staggering amounts.

These poisons destroy lives and result in billions of dollars of illicit cash flowing to transnational criminal organizations on the Mexican side of the border. These organizations are described best in one word: evil.

Over the last decade, Mexican drug cartels have been responsible for deaths of thousands of Mexicans, and their exports have killed thousands of Americans. Mexico prosecutes relatively few of the murders that occur on its soil.

The cartels kill with impunity. They kill Catholic priests. They kill journalists. They kill students. They kill politicians. They have killed U.S. agents. And they kill each other. The rule of law has been replaced in many Mexican states with the law of violence, revenge, and brutal force.

Headlines over the past 2 years tell the story: National Catholic Register, May 22, 2018: "Why Is Mexico the Deadliest Place to Be a Priest?"

The New York Times, December 21, 2017: "Most Lethal to Journalists: 1. War Zones 2. Mexico."

CNN, July 2, 2018: "Mexico goes to the polls . . . 132 politicians have been killed since campaigning began."

The Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2018: "'It's a Crisis of Civilization in Mexico.' 250,000 Dead. 37,400 Missing."

Progress against the cartels has been too slow, but there have been some encouraging developments. The trial of the alleged head of the Sinaloa cartel, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, is underway in New York. Within the last month, the Department of Justice indicted individuals affiliated with the Jalisco Nueva Generacion cartel, but those individuals remain at large.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration also recently announced it was joining with State and local officials in Chicago specifically to go after Mexican cartels, which have played a role in the violence that plagues that community, a community that is 1,500 miles from the border.

In announcing the action, the DEA said: "There is no single entity or solution that can stop the flow of dangerous illicit drugs like heroin and fentanyl into Chicago or to keep them from harming the citizens of this great city. . . . To be clear, these drugs are being produced, manufactured, and trafficked by various Mexican cartels to numerous parts of the United States and elsewhere in the world."

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the border issue does not just affect California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. It affects the entire Nation, including my district in western Pennsylvania.

Our two countries have not done enough to combat the epidemic of drugs and violence. It is an epidemic that has left mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters on both sides of the border steeped in grief.

There is no single solution to this evil. But one tool is available, and that is the force of our will. It is an act of the will to stop the transfer of drugs northbound into the United States and the transfer of illicit cash southbound into Mexico.

A secure border is a necessary prerequisite to this end. That secure border requires not only, where appropriate, physical barriers. It also requires significantly increased capacity for inspecting vehicles traveling between the United States and Mexico at our ports of entry.

More inspection lanes, more equipment, and more personnel were prescribed in the Securing America's Future Act. If we are serious about securing the border, that bill should accompany any appropriations language we pass this month.

As the 115th Congress draws to a close, let us take one more vital step to ending the drug crisis and bring peace to Mexico and communities across the United States.

Mr. Speaker, let's secure our border.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 18 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WILLIAMS) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

You have blessed us with all good gifts, and this past week, with thankful hearts, we gathered with family and loved ones throughout this great land to celebrate our blessings together.

Bless the newly elected Members of the 116th Congress who resume their orientation on Capitol Hill. Give them calm and confidence as they prepare for a new role as servants of our Nation's citizens.

Bless the Members of the people's House who have been entrusted with the privilege to serve our Nation and all Americans in their need. Grant them to work together in respect and affection, faithful in the responsibilities they have been given.

As the end of the 115th Congress approaches, bestow upon them the gifts of wisdom and discernment, that in their actions, they will do justice, love with mercy, and walk humbly with You.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CURTIS)